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PP RUEHBI RUEHCI
DE RUEHCI #0093 0551008
ZNR UUUUU ZZH
P 241008Z FEB 06
FM AMCONSUL CALCUTTA
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 0812
INFO RUEHBI/AMCONSUL MUMBAI 0291
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC
RHMFIUU/CDR USPACOM HONOLULU HI
RUEHCI/AMCONSUL CALCUTTA 0993
RUEHNE/AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI PRIORITY 0757
RUEHKA/AMEMBASSY DHAKA 0170
RUEHGO/AMEMBASSY RANGOON 0096
RUEHKT/AMEMBASSY KATHMANDU 0175
RUEHIL/AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD 0121
RUEHCG/AMCONSUL CHENNAI 0291

UNCLAS CALCUTTA 000093

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E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: PHUM PGOV PTER ASEC KCRM SOCI IN

SUBJECT: KUKI LIBERATION ARMY ABDUCTS KUKI COMMUNITY LEADER DR.
LUNKIM IN MANIPUR

¶1. (SBU) On January 17, the Kuki Liberation Army (KLA) kidnapped Chairman of the Kuki Movement for Human Rights (KMHR) and Administrative Secretary of the Kuki Christian Church Dr. Tongkhojang Lunkim in Senapati district of Manipur state in Northeast India. While ostensibly fighting for an independent Kuki homeland, the KLA is known more for abductions and extortion. During a visit to Senapati to attend a meeting of the village development council, Lunkim and three of his colleagues met with KLA members. Subsequently, his colleagues were allowed to depart but Lunkim was detained. The KLA is reportedly demanding USD 226,00 for his release. The money has not been paid and Lunkim remains in KLA's custody. Lunkim's wife waited over two weeks, until February 6, to file a report with the police, apparently in the hope that the family could negotiate a quiet release for Lunkim from the KLA. In 2002 Lunkim's son, a senior official of a government telecom office, was kidnapped by KLA and reportedly released on payment of a large ransom. (Note: The KLA has a history of kidnapping for ransom. In 2002 its members abducted the son of a former Chief Minister and in 2003 a German NGO worker visiting Manipur.)

¶2. (SBU) According to Manipur-based human rights NGO Human Rights Alert (protect), on February 17 KLA claimed that Lunkim was "summoned in connection with a case relating to the organization and Kuki politics in which he has meddled," and "the truth of the situation is not abduction for ransom but a penalty (fine) in lieu of capital punishment." A representative of the NGO told post that the KLA alleges that Lunkim made financial gains by brokering a ceasefire between the Indian army and eight tribal insurgent outfits, including the KLA, in Manipur in 2005. Kuki social organizations have appealed to the KLA for his release and KMHR has apprised the National Human Rights Commission of the case.

¶3. (SBU) COMMENT: This recent kidnapping reflects the persistent law and order problem of insurgency-plagued Manipur, a state with 15 active insurgencies. As a prominent Kuki figure, Lunkim's kidnapping also demonstrates the complex and often violent internal politics of the Kuki community.

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